

So Good-luck came, and on my roof did light,
Like noyse-lesse Snow; or as the dew of night.

But loveliest of all are his lovers:

They tread on clouds, and though they
sometimes fall,
They fall like dew, but make no noise at all.
So silently they one to th' other come,
As colours steal into the Peare or Plum,
And Aire-like, leave no presson to be seen
Where e're they met, or parting place has
been.

Beside such silence, purely beautiful, stands
a silence of
another land, still pleasant, but with a slight
touch of
terror; like the landscape of that Castle of
Indolence built
in the clouds by James Thomson (who spent
his own days
indolently abed, because 'I see no motive to
rise, man'):

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,
Where naught but shadowy forms was seen to
move
As Idlesse fancied in her dreaming mood;
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines aye waving to and fro
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out below,
The murmuring main was heard and scarcely
heard to flow.

Increase that sinister suspense and let the
pleasure further
dwindle till it vanishes—you have then the
darker silence
of the Woods of Westermains with the
phantom eyes
beneath their leaves; or of the forests of La
Fontaine's
warning:

O belles, 6vitez

Le fond des bois et leur vaste silence;

or the midnight hush of the Ballad of True
Thomas:

About the dead hour of night

He heard the bridles ring:

or those 'severa silentianoctis*' of Lucretius,
which contrast
so characteristically with Virgil's 'friendly'
moon.

Few open Valerius Flaccus now; but I can
never read